



## Commonwealth of Kentucky Energy and Environment Cabinet

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **Spring Forest Fire Hazard Season Begins** *Outdoor Burning Restrictions Take Effect Feb. 15*

**FRANKFORT, Ky.** (Feb. 15, 2013) – Kentucky law designates Feb. 15 through April 30 as spring forest fire hazard season. During this time, it is illegal to burn anything within 150 feet of any woodland or brushland between the daylight hours of 6 a.m. and 6 p.m. The law is intended to prevent forest fires by allowing outdoor burning only after 6 p.m. when conditions are less likely to cause a wildfire to spread.

“Wildfire is an extremely dangerous situation that doesn’t have to happen,” said Leah MacSwords, director of the Division of Forestry (KDF). “Kentuckians have lived with wildfires for so long that people think they are a natural occurrence, but nothing can be further from the truth. Deliberate or careless acts by people lead to wildfires with the largest two causes by far being arson and burning of trash and debris.” Last year, KDF suppressed 1,234 fires that burned 32,855 acres across the state, and arson continued being the leading cause of wildfires in Kentucky.

To reduce the risks of wildfire, forestry officials recommend that citizens be aware of fire hazard seasons, outdoor burning laws, campfire safety and precautions to take while burning woody debris. The following guidelines provided by KDF summarize the specifics of forest fire season:

- Be aware of all outdoor burning restrictions, including forest fire hazard seasons, air pollution regulations and restrictions imposed by local ordinances and county burn bans.
- Avoid burning debris during fire hazard seasons and during times of dry, windy conditions.
- Completely extinguish all campfires and debris piles. Never leave a fire unattended and always extinguish fires if conditions become too windy. The smallest spark can lead to a dangerous wildfire.

- Properly extinguish smoking materials. Put out cigarettes, cigars or pipes only in cleared areas free of vegetation or debris.
- Avoid parking cars, trucks or recreational vehicles on dry vegetation. The exhaust system on a vehicle can reach a temperature of more than 1,000 degrees, which could easily start a wildfire.
- Incorporate “Firewise” practices around homes and communities in forested areas. Firewise practices range from creating defensible space around homes by removing leaves, debris and firewood and ensuring access for fire response personnel and equipment in rural or isolated areas.
- Report suspicious acts of arson to the nearest Kentucky State Police post or call the Target Arson Hotline at 1-800-27-ARSON.

For more information about fire hazard seasons, outdoor burning laws and safe burning practices, contact the Kentucky Division of Forestry at 1-800-866-0555 or visit the division’s website at <http://forestry.ky.gov>.

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**Editor’s Note:** The mission of the Kentucky Division of Forestry is to protect and enhance the forest resources of the Commonwealth. The agency is responsible for preventing and suppressing wildfires on state and private lands as well as providing assistance to landowners and communities for the purpose of sustaining the health, diversity and productivity of our forests to meet the needs of present and future generations.